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Library Trustee Minutes 01/13/2009

Robbins Library Board of Trustees
Minutes
January 13, 2009

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:17. Attending were trustees Heather Calvin, Katharine Fennelly, Kathryn Gandek-Tighe, Barbara Muldoon, Frank Murphy, Brigid Kennedy-Pfister, and Joyce Radochia. Also attending was the library director, Maryellen Loud. The board welcomed the new trustee, Brigid Kennedy-Pfister.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 9, 2008 meeting were approved as read.

In appreciation of his many years of service the trustees will give a memento to David Castiglioni, who resigned from the board.

Communications

Geri Tremblay, a board member of the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, extended a special invitation to the board to an event at the Old Schwamb Mill on January 24, "Tea with the Dallins."

Ms. Loud received a letter from Bob Mirak, chairman of the Alan Hovhaness Commemorative Committee, requesting permission to erect a monument on library grounds "to honor the memory and achievements" of Alan Hovhaness, a former Arlington resident and universally acclaimed composer. Ms. Loud reported that she had discussed the issue with the town manager, Brian Sullivan. In discussing the issue the trustees considered whether any existing library policy covers this type of request. Although there is currently no policy to guide this decision, it would be helpful for the trustees to establish guidelines and policies for such requests, as the existing gift policy does not cover this. The consensus of the board was that the library grounds are not an appropriate location for this monument and we will so advise the Commemorative Committee.

Community Time

No members of the community were in attendance.

Director's Report

The board reviewed the December Director's Report. Ms. Gandek-Tighe commented on the ongoing adult use of the young adult/teen area. Although the new location of the area on the Massachusetts Avenue side of the library has made this section particularly inviting, adults used the space before the move. Although this is not an issue while school is in session, this area is intended primarily for teenagers.

Ms. Radochia expressed concern, shared by the other trustees, that the resignation of the assistant director, Cindy Diminture, who is assuming a new position as director of the Newburyport Public Library, will have a serious impact on the library operations. Since Ms. Diminture was an unusually versatile and competent librarian, who had wide-ranging responsibilities, it will be difficult to deal with her absence.

FY 2010 Budget Update and Narrative

Ms. Loud met with the Town Manager to discuss the three budget scenarios submitted for FY2010: level funded, 5% reduction and 10% reduction. Some potential outcomes of a 10% budget reduction are closing an evening at 5:00; closing the children's library on Thursday evening, significant reduction in the materials budget, and subsidizing of Fox salaries and expenses with funding from the Thrift Shop. Trustees expressed concern about relying on volunteer efforts to fund a municipal service. If municipal appropriation requirements are not met, the library will not meet state aid standards. In addition to losing state aid, the library risks losing certification as well. However, if libraries across the state face the same financial constraints, this may become a key issue for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Mr. Murphy, a commissioner on that board, acknowledged that this is new territory to be explored by the MBLC.

Ms. Loud explained her handling of state aid. Unlike some libraries which use it as it comes in, Ms. Loud keeps the second payment in reserve for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Loud explained to the board that she is willing to be flexible in staffing. In addition to the resignation of Cindy Diminture, she is expecting the retirement of Maryann Uttam, head of the children's department, in February. Because of sick leave buy-back, and unused vacation time, the earliest she could rehire an assistant director would be May. At this point, however, Ms. Loud is exploring many possibilities.

Ms. Calvin asked about the significance of de-certification, and she was told that in addition to the loss of state aid inter-library loan privileges and borrowing privileges from other libraries would be rescinded. Since town meeting members always raise the question before voting on the library budget, it is perceived in the community to be a serious concern.

Upon receiving suggestions from the trustees Ms. Loud will rework parts of the budget narrative, particularly with regard to the future outlook for the library given a budget reduction.

Mid-Year Report of Trust Fund Liaison

Ms. Muldoon gave the board an overview of expenditures from both restricted and unrestricted funds. She will send a copy of the full report to the trustees.

The board approved a motion by Ms. Muldoon (seconded by Mr. Murphy) to take \$250 from the Farmer Fund to purchase staff recognition gifts.

Mid-Year Report of Russell Fund Expenditures

Ms. Loud gave a brief report on Russell fund expenditures.

Mid-Year Evaluation of Trustee and Administrative Goals

This agenda item is deferred to the February meeting.

Fundraising

This agenda item is deferred to the February meeting.

Trust Fund Expenditure Policy/Trust Fund Advisory Committee

On January 22 all the trust fund boards will be represented at a meeting to review, discuss, and approve the town-wide trust fund expenditure policy which was developed through the work of the Trust Fund Advisory Committee.

Trustees had questions and concerns which the representatives of the library board who attend will raise at this meeting.

Mr. Murphy said that he would like the reports which will be provided by the Treasurer's Office to be in sufficient detail so that we may be able to provide reasonable oversight.

Ms. Loud had questions about the timing of the reports and the effect of that timing on planning Russell Fund programs.

It is expected that our representatives (Ms. Fennelly, Ms. Muldoon, and Mr. Murphy) will relay the boards questions and comments, but will approve the policy. Ms. Calvin made a motion (seconded by Ms. Gandek-Tighe) to send our representatives to the meeting with the authority to vote and approve the policy.

Author Program

The board agreed to use Dick Haley to engage Hallie Ephron, author of Never Tell a Lie for a program on a weeknight in February. He will write the press releases. We will no longer send out flyers advertising author programs, as these seem to get little or no response.

2008 Annual Report

The report as written by Ms. Loud was approved with revisions from the Board.

Recorder of Trustee Minutes

For now, Ms. Gandek-Tighe and Ms. Radochia will alternate months.

Other

Mr. Murphy recommended that trustees consider attending a trustee workshop on March 7.

The status of the 501 c 3 was discussed.

The date of the next meeting will be February 10.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce H. Radochia